(ii) is a substrate for cleavage by an RNaseIII enzyme to produce a double-stranded RNA product,

(iii) does not produce a general sequence-independent killing of the mammalian cells, and

(iv) reduces expression of said target gene in a manner dependent on the sequence of said double stranded portion of the hairpin RNA.

2-8. (Canceled)

9. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the target gene is a genomic gene of the mammalian cells.

10. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the target gene is an heterologous gene relative to the genome of the mammalian cells.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the mammalian cells are primate cells.

13. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the double stranded portion of the hairpin RNA is at least 20 nucleotides in length.

14. (Previously presented) The method of claim 12, wherein the mammalian cells are human cells.

15. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein expression of the target gene is attenuated by at least 5 fold.

16-27. (Canceled)

28. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the hairpin RNA does not cause activation of a protein kinase RNA-activated (PKR) sequence-independent response in the mammalian cells.